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From: Scott Smith
Sent: Mon 7/25/2016 2:14:27 PM
Subject: FW: states and EPA...

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Fyi...I received this from some friends at the EPA (region 9)...

EPA:

State regulators plead for increased funding, collaboration

Sean Reilly, E&E reporter

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More federal funding, increased collaboration across government and a renewed emphasis on communicating the benefits of environmental regulations are among the priorities laid out in a new report by the organization representing the heads of state environmental agencies.

As arguments over the cost and level of environmental protection have grown, it sometimes appears "as though we have forgotten the underlying reason for environmental regulation -- to protect public health and the natural environment in which we live," the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) said in the report, released today and geared toward what it described as "a time of political transition" in the coming year.

Besides focusing the debate on the connection between environmental protection and public health, the group urged adoption of "straightforward and easily accessible measures" that more effectively show the results of state and federal programs.

In collaboration with U.S. EPA, the council is already at work to identify common yardsticks at the state level; a similar approach could be used to examine environmental and public health outcomes regionally and nationally, according to the report.

ECOS is also seeking more money for EPA's state and tribal assistance grant programs.

Because spending has remained flat for more than a decade, "federal investment in the environmental enterprise is not keeping up with the cost of doing business," the group said. The report singled out EPA's two state revolving loan funds for water projects, saying communities across the country "face aging and decaying water and wastewater systems in need of major investments."

The report's release came as ECOS members met in Washington, D.C., today for an all-day conference on the theme of "Making Connections: Water, Air and Energy Innovation."

In a morning keynote speech, former EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe called the lead contamination of Flint, Mich.'s drinking water supply "a big wake-up call" for cities around the country.

Perciasepe, now president of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, a nonprofit group, called for a more "holistic" strategy to environmental protection that would, for example, seek to better harness the expertise of the business community and give cities a role in implementation of programs like the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan, which seeks to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

Asked how to get EPA, which like other large federal agencies typically operates within silos, to take a holistic approach, Perciasepe noted that those silos are rooted in federal law and that congressional oversight is also similarly fragmented.

"I would caution that you can't bring everything together all at once," he said. But in place of multiple state implementation plans addressing various air quality requirements, he said by way of example, it might be possible to do just one that covers "all the bases."

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